CLAIMS

I claim:

1.   A system for improving the management of information in a group participant purchasing environment having a legacy database and legacy processing software comprising:

        a wide area network interface processor capable of accessing said legacy database and said legacy processing software, said interface processor for preparing said legacy database for transmission over a wide area network;

        a secure front end processor for receiving, by secure FTP, said legacy database into comma delimited text data fields in a new database; and

        an interim data storage and secure transfer processor for receiving said new database from said secure front-end processor and storing and transferring said new database to users in said group participant purchasing environment.

2.   The system of Claim 1 wherein said wide area network is the Internet.

3.   The system of Claim 1 wherein said legacy database and said new database comprise employee benefit enrollment information.

4. A method for managing information in a group participant purchasing environment, said management occurring with minimal paperwork and with ease of access by individuals inexperienced with computer based information management tools, the method comprising the steps of:

proviiding access processing for information and enrollment through a display device and an information input device;

providing action processing for modification of information associated with an enrolled individual in the group participant purchasing environment;

providing collaborative processing for including co-browsing capabilities for the modification of information and/or the development of new information in conjunction with an established database associated with said group participant purchasing environment; and

providing legacy processing for translating business rules and legacy application structure into a new structure suitable for use in conjunction with said access processing, said action processing, and said collaborative processing.

5. The method of Claim 4 further comprising the step of providing user assistance processing during any of said access processing, action processing, collaborative processing, and legacy processing steps, said user assistance processing comprising the establishment of a communication link between the user and a customer service

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representative capable of answering questions and providing instructions to the user during the implementation of the method for managing information.

6.   The method of Claim 4 wherein said step of providing access processing comprises the steps of:

> providing an initial screen display to a user with instructions for initial access;
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> requesting and receiving from the user group identification information associated with the group participant purchasing environment;
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> authorizing group data access by the user;
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> requesting and receiving employee and/or other individual identification information from the user;
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> authorizing individual data access by the user;
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> querying whether co-browsering is requested by the user;
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> if co-browsing is requested by the user, connecting and confirming access to a call center and acknowledging the establishment of co-browsing;
>
> retrieving group data from a group participant purchasing environment database; and
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> retrieving individual data from said database.

7.   The method of Claim 4 wherein said step of providing action processing comprises the steps of:

> providing an action menu display to the user with instructions for choosing actions;

querying whether the action processing session involves initial enrollment of the user;

if initial enrollment is not being requested, then displaying the current individual data associated with the user and querying whether the action processing session is intended to modify the current data;

if initial enrollment is requested by the user, requesting and receiving the employee or individual data required for enrollment;

retrieving from an SQL database the available benefits options for the user;

requesting and receiving modifications, deletions and/or additions to individual data from the user;

displaying the new individual data as modified and noting any errors resulting from inconsistencies with the available benefits options;

querying whether further changes are to be made by the user;

if further changes are indicated, repeating said steps of requesting and receiving modifications, deletions and/or additions and said step of displaying new individual data as modified;

confirming that the action processing is complete;

transferring modified data to said SQL database; and

returning to said step of providing an action menu display.

8.   The method of Claim 4 wherein said step of providing collaborative processing comprises the steps of:

retrieving group program and plan structure information;

querying whether multi-user collaboration is required;

if multi-user collaboration is required, polling and logging in disburse end users for collaboration and establishing multi-user hierarchy and protocol for co-browsing session;

if multi-user collaboration is not requested, establishing a one to one collaborative co-browsing session and querying the scope of collaboration;

carrying out a collaborative modification of data and/or development of data between users;

receiving input from the users and revising a data work product;

broadcasting to the users developments and modifications in said data work product;

querying whether collaborative processing is complete;

if collaborative processing is not complete, broadcasting the status, querying whether further interaction is required, and returning to said steps of receiving input, revising said data work product, and broadcasting developments and modifications;

if collaborative processing is complete, closing the co-browsing session and end user links;

updating an employer and/or group plan database with modified or developed data; and

emailing all users involved in said collaborative processing said updated employer and/or group plan database information.

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9.   The method of Claim 4 wherein said step of providing legacy processing comprises the steps of:

retrieving group historical information from an initial database;

querying whether said initial database comprises a legacy system;

if said initial database does not comprise a legacy system, retrieving default database structures and business rules;

if said initial database comprises a legacy system, retrieving legacy application with business rules;

translating business rules and legacy application structure into a standardized database structure and format;

generating a wide area network front-end system based on said standardized database structure and format;

querying whether any updates or changes to said database are required;

if any updates and changes are required, modifying the rules and/or structure to confirm compliance and returning to said step of generating a wide area network front-end system;

if no updates or changes are required, presenting an HTML website structure on said wide area network; and

providing interactive data exchange through said website structure in connection with an SQL database.